

SPEECH

OF

James

MR. THOMPSON, OF PENNSYLVANIA,

1806-1874

ON THE

OREGON QUESTION.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JANUARY 28, 1846.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED AT THE UNION OFFICE.

1846.

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SPEECH.

On the resolution of notice to Great Britain to abrogate the convention of joint occupancy relative to the Oregon territory.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. THOMPSON addressed the committee as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have desired an opportunity to occupy the attention of the committee for a short time on this great question. I have the honor, sir, in part, to represent an old Commonwealth, occupying an important position in the republic, and feeling a deep concern in all that may be presumed to materially affect the general interests. I shall neither speak loud nor long on this subject; and, in setting out, I may be permitted to say that I entertain views very widely differing from many—nay, most of the gentlemen who have spoken on this question. We have been told by very many of them that, this notice passing, war was to ensue—actual and inevitable war—with England. Now, sir, let us think of that, and look at the signs a little. A month ago I entertained the opinion, and expressed it repeatedly, that there would be no war if the notice were given. All through the debate, gentlemen on both sides of the question spoke of war—on the one side, admitted that it might come; and, on the other, that it was inevitable. Why, sir, where do you see any signs of war? Look out all over the face of nature and society, and there is no war there. The President says nothing of the kind. The Senate—yes, sir, they will preclude the supposed possibility—it is only a prediction—of a war, or chance of war, by voting down this notice. The press throughout our country is everywhere peaceful. So it is in England. Sir Robert Peel did remark, some time ago, that “they”—the English—“had rights (in Oregon) which, if violated, they would be ready to maintain.” And who doubts that? Nobody proposes to invade any of their rights *under* the treaty; and Sir Robert Peel could certainly have meant no other rights while the treaty remains in full force. Is there war in this? The Queen has said nothing about war, the British cabinet nothing; and, sir, we have, by the late arrivals, the views of the press there since the receipt of the President’s message. Their comments on that document are perfectly pacific. The recommendations of the President to give this notice; to erect stockades on the road to Oregon; to raise the riflemen; to establish an Indian agency; to

extend our laws over the territory; to send our mails there—all, *all* this is spoken of, and the paragraph usually ends in a little bit of a compliment, that Mr. Polk is a very clever writer. Sir, there is no war in this; the whole poetry of the thing is destroyed by this late arrival. Some body there proposes to trade off Oregon for the tariff. Sir, I will stand no trade of that kind, rest assured of it. No, no, sir. A friend of mine from Illinois has exhibited some anxiety to know my course on this subject. I have arrived at the right point to tell him now; (here Mr. T. looked round for him, and remarked that he did not see him,) but I will tell him *I go for the whole of Oregon*, and the tariff too! The whole of Oregon. (Applause.) I am, therefore, opposed to the trade. But, sir, there is nothing like war in this proposition to trade, in my judgment. Let us see further. It is said the English are repairing their fortresses, mounting cannon on the fortifications at Sheerness, Pembroke, Portsmouth, Jersey, and the Cape of Good Hope. Why, sir, do you suppose the old gentleman (Johnny Bull) is really afraid the Yankees will come over the water and take these places from him? Soberly and seriously, does any gentleman suppose it is on account of us he is arming these places? Why, sir, there is peace everywhere—everywhere *but here*, in this little dark circumference—this hall. Excuse me, sir, when I say I have sometimes thought of the story of the “*Tempest in a tea-pot*.”

England, sir, conscious of her position and of her title, has never exhibited as much sensitiveness in relation to this subject as gentlemen seem to suppose. I have exhibited a little of the spirit of the press in relation to the recommendations of our Executive. No alarm has followed it in England. But we have gone further on this subject. The venerable gentleman from Massachusetts, [Mr. ADAMS,] while President of the of the United States, in 1826, recommended, I believe, the erection of a fort at the mouth of the Columbia river, on Cape Disappointment. He will correct me if I err. This is on the north side of it. Actual fortification, commanding a most important position, was recommended by him. Mr. Monroe had made a similar recommendation. The English made no objection, and no threats of war on that account, and do not seem to do so now, under present recommendations.

England seems to have borrowed her faith in her title from us. From this hall valuable lessons may be learned on that side of the question, and if she does bluster much about it, she will be much encouraged in doing so on account of occurrences here. But that is not the point just now; the argument is, that if we give the notice we shall have war.

Was that the understanding by the parties when the treaties of 1818 and 1827 for joint occupancy, as some call it, were entered into? Did the President, the Senate, the King, and the House of Lords so understand it? Did they understand that a treaty of peace, which provided for the commencement of a war had been entered into, which agreed that the convention should be terminated on a notice of twelve months by either party to the other, which notice should be equivalent to a declaration of war? This, sir, this would have been something of a novelty. If it be so, that the giving of notice to end the joint occupancy shall be equivalent to a declaration of war, I beg to say it places the parties in a dilemma, truly. Without speaking of rights, it would be this: if the occupancy continued, the party having the right might lose it by the growth and encroachment of the other; and if the power getting worsted by the operation should give the notice to quit, he must be prepared to fight it out. This would be changing the question of title into the contingencies of the result of a war about it. I think I give but a fair analysis of the argument that makes the notice equivalent to war. Why, sir, the notice is not a war measure; the press in England don't at all speak of it as such; and I will take leave to venture my belief that, in the estimation of every civilized power on earth, war, as the result of this notice, would be considered as a violation of the spirit and intent of that treaty. What would be the effect of the notice? Simply, sir, to remit the parties to their original rights. What would be our position? The Secretary of State, [Mr. Buchanan,] in his powerful and conclusive argument on the subject in the late negotiation with the English minister, has shown clearly that England, at the treaty of 1818, by her ministers, recognised the United States as the party in possession of the territory for all objects of negotiation between the governments. This being so, sir, if we give the notice, England must move first: we are in possession, and she not. Would she be justified in fighting on sight? No, sir; she must make such offers as would put her in the right; she must move; and if that can be done, we shall, I trust, never be ready to fight in the wrong. An arrangement would soon follow—a final settlement would ensue.

Suppose, Mr. Chairman, the notice given, and Great Britain should take it into her head to go to war, her manifesto would be a curiosity I rather think. We will suppose, of course, that it would contain a true statement of her title—the right she was remitted to by reason of the treaty being ended. She would begin by stating that one John Meares, a lieutenant of the royal navy, at the time in the service of the East India Company, and sailing in a Portuguese vessel, landed at Nootka in 1788; while there, made some trades with the natives; among other things, procured a right to build there; returned the next season, and commenced building a vessel. The viceroy of Mexico, conceiving it an interference with the territorial rights of Spain, seized and confiscated two ships then lying in the sound

—the *Argonaut* and *Princess Royal*—which were afterwards given up; required him to leave the spot, and broke up his establishment. He proceeds to England, on behalf of those interested in the establishment and property, to procure from that government a demand of indemnity from Spain for the seizure. Before arriving there, however, Spain had made known to Great Britain her intention to demand from that government punishment on the aggressor, and guarantees and assurances against future aggressions by the subjects of that power on her possessions on the north Pacific. Gentlemen will bear in mind, for this is briefly the position of the parties up to that time, that Spain claimed redress for a territorial interference; and on the arrival of Meares, England made a demand on Spain for an injury done to personal property of one of her subjects. These were the issues, territorial and personal. The negotiations resulted in the treaty signed at the Escorial on the 24th October, 1790. This treaty provided for the restoration of the lands and buildings which had been seized. In point of fact, I believe the reoccupation never took place. The two following articles of that convention I shall read, as showing what was agreed on:

"Art. 3. In order to strengthen the bonds of friendship, and to preserve in future perfect harmony and good understanding between the two contracting parties, it is agreed that their respective subjects shall not be disturbed or restricted in carrying on their *fisheries* in the Pacific ocean or in the South seas, or in landing on the coasts of those seas; in places not already occupied, for the purpose of *carrying on commerce with the natives* of the country, or of *making settlements there*; the whole subject, nevertheless, to the restrictions specified in the three following articles."

The 5th article, being the only important one on this subject, I will give:

"Art. 5. As well in the places which are to be restored to the British subjects by virtue of the first article, as in all other parts of the northwestern coast of North America, or of the islands adjacent, situate to the north of the parts of the said coast already occupied by Spain, *wherever the subjects* of either of the two powers shall have made settlements since the month of April, 1789, or shall *HEREAFTER* make any, the subjects of the other shall have free access, and shall carry on their trade without any disturbance or molestation."

The above, Mr. Chairman, is the title conferred by the Nootka Sound convention, so much relied on by England. I shall not stop to inquire whether this treaty was afterwards destroyed or abrogated by the war of 1796, or revived in 1814. Commercial treaties are certainly, as a principle of international law, abrogated by war. Why? Simply because it depends upon future arrangements whether the parties shall ever be at peace, and if never at peace the treaties are at an end. But I will not further argue this point. What rights do these articles quoted give to England? The right of soil, or the right of commerce? I say "give" to England; for can any gentleman believe that England conceived herself the owner of one inch of that coast by prior right, and entered into that treaty on the terms used in it? Did she conceive that she was acquiring title, exclusive or otherwise, to any of it? The burden of the stipulations is for carrying on the fisheries, and for trade and commerce with the natives of the country, "or of making settlements there;" the whole subject to "the restrictions in the following articles," one of which stipulates that settlements north of the territory occupied by Spain, made by the subjects of either, after 1789, the subjects of the other should have free access to, and right to "carry on trade" with them. If subjects of Spain settled north of the

territory occupied by Spain, that was all right; if Englishmen settled, that was all right; neither was to be hindered by the other; this right was to result from the treaty; Englishmen were to settle under the treaty; and the privilege of trade, as well as protection, was the consequence. But suppose the treaty ended by war, or otherwise, what would be the effect? Could Englishmen settle there then? If so, by what right? Not under the treaty; for that did not exist. Had they any other title? Sir, Spain had acquired title more than two centuries before by discovery, as far north as the northern boundary of Oregon. This England knew. It was notorious. Do gentlemen think she would have stipulated for a right to fish and settle there if she did not know this? If she had no title there anterior to this Nootka sound title, what would be the result, then, with her, if that convention were terminated? She would be remitted to her original title; if that did not exist, she would be without a claim or pretence of right. Here sir, I am about to state a principle, and I call the attention of my learned colleague, the chairman on Foreign Affairs, [Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL,] to it. It is this: if two nations agree mutually to occupy a territory for any length of time together, or for an indefinite period, the right of neither by the occupancy so agreed for acquires or gains strength as against the other during the time the agreement lasts. Is this not so? ["Yes, yes," from several.] It is so. If not so, an agreement for reciprocal navigation of a river would ripen into a title, no matter whether within the exclusive jurisdiction of but one power or not. A nation might demand the perpetual opening of a port, because by treaty it had been open for a definite period. We might have a title to the Newfoundland fisheries if this were so. But it is not so. Suppose, then, we look at the title so situated under these circumstances. The subjects of Great Britain entered into the territory under the Nootka sound convention; and suppose that continued in force until England entered into the convention of 1818 with us, which is only admitted for argument so to be. The agreement with us ended the agreement with Spain. Suppose we should now terminate the agreement entered into with us? England would be remitted to her rights anterior to her agreement with us. What would they be? Why, an agreement with Spain. Suppose that agreement is terminated by her entering into the convention with us, by the war with Spain, or by notice now, under our title from Spain, England is remitted to her rights anterior to the Nootka sound convention; and what were they? Nothing—nothing, sir. For she made no pretence of title to the territory now claimed at that time. This Nootka sound convention is now relied upon as the foundation and superstructure of her title, and, if my position be correct, confers none whatever. Sir Charles Fox said of this convention in 1792—and he was quite as English as any body here could desire an authority to be—after noticing several incongruities in it, "that it reminded him of a lawyer's will, written by himself, who, at a particular clause, made a marginal note: *'This will afford a glorious chance for a suit in chancery.'*" I will not stop to say how unkind this remark was to the profession—[laugh]—but I will say that it exhibited clearly the opinion—contemporaneous opinion of Englishmen—of that treaty as the foundation of title. Will John Bull go to war on this title? Why, sir, he has always been desirous to preserve appearances—wishes the world to believe he has a good cause—

no matter how the fact is. I remember in my juvenile days of reading a book called "*John Bull and Brother Jonathan.*" The old gentleman was represented lecturing his son Jonathan about not paying taxes and tea duties, &c., without grumbling. There was a picture in the book. There stood Jonathan, a long, lank, gaunt-looking fellow, and beside him John Bull, very genteel in appearance, toilet recently made, speaking in the most courteous manner to his undutiful son, with one hand in his bosom, and the other *slyly slipped* into Jonathan's pocket—[A laugh.] He was preserving appearances. And he will try and do so again; and, if appearances are against him, he will not fight. Both appearances and facts are against him in our case.

But suppose England should determine to fight, what does she risk? Let us look at this as a necessary means of ascertaining the probabilities about her ultimate course in this matter. Sir, this manifesto that I have been considering, would be scanned, her title examined, and she convicted in the judgment, not only of contemporaries, but of the world, in all time, of injustice, and consequently dishonor. But again: a gentleman the other day told us that her possessions on the north stretched along for three thousand miles; that they contained as many square miles as the United States. Will she risk this? Why, sir, Michigan proposes to annex all this to herself in ninety days, [laughing.] But, seriously, would she ever risk these immense possessions for the acquisition of a few parallels of latitude north of the Columbia? Why, the loss of her American possessions would be the era of her decline and final downfall. Will she risk it? Will gentlemen who have apostrophized her sagacity believe that she will not think of this? In my opinion, Mr. Chairman, she would as certainly lose these possessions, if she goes to war with us, as that I am standing on this floor. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Upper and Lower Canada would all be lost to her forever! Michigan will hardly be expected to perform all this, but it will be perfectly within the power of the Union.

Her commerce, too, what of that? Gentlemen give us glowing pictures of the injury to ours in the event of war. Hers is said to be much greater, and would it not suffer as much as ours? If injury to commerce be an argument to induce a sacrifice of rights on our part, will it have no effect to counter-vail aggression on the part of England? This is an argument, which, if it may be applied to us, has much greater force when appealed to her, because her commerce is more extensive, and because it is more important to her than ours to us. Will she risk her commerce?

But, sir, there is Ireland. Will she risk Ireland?—at least a bloody conflict to retain it? The standing army there now is required to be 29,000 strong, I believe. Will she risk a conflict there? This, she knows, she would most inevitably do by going to war with us.

And France, sir—ay, here is the solution to the enigma of her islandic preparations for war. France, like a huge serpent, lies in envenomed coils at her feet, ready at the moment of opportunity to strike her ancient foe. When death shall have called hence her so called republican king, then comes the difficulty. Will there be no pretender, no struggle on the part of the exiled house of Bourbon? If not, will there not be difficulties on the subject of the regency? The Count de Paris is but a child. Who will be re-

gent? The inactive, or rather passive Duke de Nemours? or the Queen mother? or the victorious de Joinville? France must and will escape intestine trouble only by foreign war. And while Agencourt, Cressy, Poitiers, and Waterloo are bitterly remembered, and still unavenged, will not the war most likely to occur with England? The conviction in England, if we may believe the intelligent sources of information is, a rupture with France on the death of Louis Philippe. He is now very old; and in view of this, England is preparing. John Bull is tying up his waist, rolling up his sleeves, and making ready for the conflict. He expects it soon. Will he risk the conjuncture of a war with us, which would increase the probabilities of a war with France?

But, in a war with us, how are the manufacturers of England to get along? How can their work-shops exist. How will she provide against starvation? or, at least, against much serious injury? Where will she get her cotton from? Let me assure the gentleman from South Carolina, [Mr. RHETT,] that this will be a most serious obstacle in the way of war, and that the cotton bales of the South will again not only be a secure breast-work against the enemy, but will insure us the victory over him. [Merriment.] Will England not think of this—of her manufacturers?

But, lastly, there comes the chances of being beaten—horse foot and dragoons. Would she think of that? Will the contest with Hercules in his cradle be forgotten? In infancy we achieved our independence, and, I trust, disenthralled a continent. In youth we gained a glorious victory, notwithstanding her power; and are not our chances now as bright—our success as probable—nay, certain?

The gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. PENDLETON]—the “lone star”* from the Old Dominion—and I conceive it quite a compliment to call him thus from such a Commonwealth—gave us but the other day quite the other side of the picture. It was in style a very handsome speech—it certainly was—[laugh.] I assure gentlemen it was. I admired the style and the execution. But in that speech he told us of the wisdom of England—of her power; that she had conquered in every land, almost on every field; that she ruled the sea “On every wave,” &c. I beg pardon, I did not mean to quote poetry—[great laughter.] By the way, sir, I see that rascally Herald (New York) has got all the poetry that has been expended on this subject, in his paper, all together side by side, without context—[Mr. HOLMES, or pretext]—yes, or pretext—beginning with Massachusetts and ending with Michigan—[merriment.] But, as I was saying, the gentleman spoke of her immense possessions everywhere scattered over the earth, and said that the “roll of her drums could be heard around the globe.” It was very graphic; the description was. I thought the gentleman heard the drums as he described. Upon my word, sir, I thought I did. Indeed it seemed so. I felt like it, and felt a “*leetle scared*” as Sam Slick would say. [Laughter.] But let us see the force of the gentleman’s appeal, or argument. I am convinced that an appeal such as this, made to that gentleman, would under all circumstances be disregarded, if he felt he was right. Accustomed to a habitude of thought when regarding that Old Commonwealth, (Virginia,) that he so ably represents,

I feel constrained to say, that I am sure the appeal to her would fall upon a deaf ear. Sir, it was an argument to our fears—it was an appeal to apprehension. What do you think of the argument? Let me give an illustration. Suppose I should meet a tremendous bruiser, and he should seize me by the collar, and say I want your coat; I reply you can’t have it. He rejoins, “I will have it,” I look at him a bit, as we say in the *west*. [Laughter.] I remember he has flogged Bendigo, licked Jim Byrne, and made the Deaf’un give in, and would have flogged Molyneaux himself, only he was dead. [Great Laughter.] I make up my mind about the matter pretty quick; I think of the carnage that would follow if I stood out; and I gently hand over the coat. I meet the gentleman from Virginia, or either of the other gentlemen who have used the same argument, and relate the whole transaction to him. What do you think he would say? Certainly, that I had got out of the scrape—that is certain; but I presume he would tell me, that he would have liked my case some better if I had shown a little more pluck. [Laughter.] This is then I think a fair illustration of the argument appealed to our apprehensions and fears. Can a nation pause upon such an argument? Never, sir, never!

But what, may I ask, is our position in relation to this question? If our title be good, why not assert it? Shall the arguments I have been combatting prevent us? Peace is a blessing, but it must be honorable to be such. If the notice should ever produce war, I insist upon it we are bound to give it; we must move in the matter. We have offered the 49th parallel of latitude as a compromise. The President tells us this has been done and rejected by the British minister. Will any man ask us again to offer it under these circumstances? He tells us, further, that the offer thus rejected was withdrawn, and our “*title asserted to the whole of Oregon*.” If we have asserted the title to be in us, and believe the assertion just, as I think this debate shows we do, I ask, are we not bound on every principle of honor to proceed to the exclusive occupancy of what is our own? If Oregon be ours, why not act up to the declaration, and possess it? We must do so—we cannot get away from it without dishonor—without abandoning our rights, and acquiescing under the arguments appealed to our apprehensions. I am firmly convinced that a firm and fearless assertion of our rights, and a determination to maintain them, is the surest way to prevent difficulties about them; and that this course will have the effect to insure peace.

Mr. Chairman, the argument so often urged here, (namely, the power of England,) what is it? It will be remembered how it was disregarded in 1776; and this government is the result of that glorious disregard. But what is that power? The population of Great Britain—of course including Ireland and Scotland—is, at most, not over 27,000,000 of inhabitants. The repealers tell us—and Mr. Smith O’Brien is law in Ireland now—that not an Irish bayonet should be taken to Oregon to assert the British claim. No repealer, at least, will aid in it, I presume he means. Here, sir, is 7,000,000 out of the account at once. In other words, in a contest with the United States, Ireland would neutralize herself. Will they bring the sepoys from India to fight us? No, I presume not. From the Cape of Good Hope will they bring troops? from the Canadas too? Why, sir, they will need troops in all these places. Some will be employed in India; some in Ireland; some at the Cape of Good Hope; some in Canada;

*The only whig from Virginia.

and some to beat these "drums round the world." [Laughter.] But let us reverse positions a little, and see what they say on the other side of the water. A few years ago, when England wanted a piece of the State of Maine, and there was talk of war with the United States, a croaker—for there are some in the English Parliament—complained that they were not ready to fight us; that their ports were unprotected; their towns were in danger; and that an armed American steamer could come out and burn *Liverpool*! One would almost be inclined to believe that this had emanated from some member who had caught a little of the confidence of my friends from the West; and it would be easy to imagine, too, that some gentlemen here had caught a little English faith and poured it out *over there*—(pointing to the other side of the House.) These things show, sir, that we should be cautious how we become alarmed. Panic is a common argument. Alarmed, sir; why, what is our power that we should be alarmed? We have twenty millions of population—united and free population; no colonies requiring a standing army to secure our possession in; a commercial marine containing several hundreds of vessels of at least 1,000 tons burden—[a voice, more than a thousand such, sir.]—I thank the gentleman; he says more than a thousand such—a host of hardy whalers, and merchantmen to man them with. Why could we not arm these vessels? It could be done in a few months; and our navy would go out in strength equal to any period of strength in the history of the British navy. A gentleman the other day—I really do not recollect who it was, for there have been several speeches made on this Oregon question this session—[a laugh]—said that all the iron establishments in the Union could not supply guns enough for some years to put us in a proper state of defence. Have the mark! I would say, my good friend, let the tariff alone, and old Pennsylvania herself can in one year make guns enough—I had almost said to reach half across the Pacific—[much laughing.] There is nothing in this thing, I assure you. I have said, we have many vessels of 1,000 tons in the merchant service, fine sailers, that could be armed. Why, sir, one of our gallant seamen made a glorious fight of it, in a little vessel—[a voice, "frigate;" another voice, the *Essex*]—a frigate at Valparaiso, and she was only a 400-ton vessel. We have now a thousand well built merchant-ships, from 800 to 1,000 tons each. Arm these, sir; arm them! and we will teach old Johny Bull that the Yankees are afloat; and a little harder to thrash than *Monsieur Crazeaud*—that's French for you, at sea—[great merriment.] Sir, I have no fear of this issue, it must come. We shall have the advantage everywhere, and in all places—in every time, in every country. We shall have the advantage in moral power, in political as well as physical. Sir, it will be like a contest between a young brave man, with a strong arm, a clear conscience, and a good cause—with wicked old age, and a thousand years of crime on his head. In such a contest we shall prevail—we shall prevail.

Mr. Chairman, I must notice a remark of the gentleman from Massachusetts, who represents the Boston district, I believe, [Mr. WINTHROP,] and who spoke on this subject some time ago. I admired the gentleman's *manner* very much. I did, indeed. Amongst other remarks he said, the "cry now was, all of Oregon or none—and echo answers, none!" Sir, where was that echo from? Was it here, sir? [Laying his hand upon his heart.] Will it not be

just to conjecture that the wish was parent to the thought? If this wish were made reality, sir, it would sound, to my ear, like defeat, dishonor; like driving the last nail in the coffin of our political existence. Because this cannot be so, until abandoned by ourselves, we yield the justice of our cause to the domineering spirit of our ancient foe. If the remark was any thing else than a figure, the machinery to round off a sentence, I regret that it was uttered. I disagree with the sentiment, and with all the qualifications the gentleman surrounded it with. But, sir, Massachusetts has been redeemed from a suspicion that hung around her patriotism on this subject by the venerable gentleman [Mr. ADAMS] now in his seat across the way. His speech was refreshing, it was a great effort; and, illustrious as had been the history of his services, this last act was an act of crowning glory, illuminating all the past.

Mr. Chairman, I have but a few remarks more to make. [Cries of "go on."] The gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. WINTHROP] spoke of our title being the *best*. His language was: "I acknowledge our title is the best"—a very considerable concession. Indeed, it has been rather common to speak thus. Now, the remark has always sounded strange to my ear. Why, sir, if we have the *best* title, England has none. There is no such thing as comparatives about title—no good, better, best. If my friend who sits beside me has a *title* for a town lot, and I have a *better* one, he has *none*. [Laughter.] Is this not so? The gentleman from Georgia is a lawyer, is he not—

Mr. HOLMES. I am.

Mr. T. continued. And a very good one, too. [Laughter.]

Mr. HOLMES. I didn't say that.

Mr. T. No, but I am very sure of it. Will he not agree that this is so: If I have a title better than his for a piece of property, why he has none. Why? because I have the title.

Mr. HOLMES. What do you call color of title?

Mr. T. Why, sir I call it a very unpromising *looking* thing. [Merriment.] If a man goes into court with only a *color* of title, he is apt to come out with a pretty highly *colored* bill of costs to pay. [A laugh.] I will give you an instance of color of title. A man buys a forged title, and enters into possession—this entering is under color of title—it would not be a very pretty color. [Laughter.] It would not be a title when the genuine one was produced. I appeal to my eloquent and learned colleague [Mr. INGERSOLL] if this is not so?

Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL. Every word of it true.

Mr. T. continued. Color of title in Great Britain, if we have the best title, would not amount to much.

In conclusion, sir, let me advert to the value of Oregon. It has beautiful valleys and fertile soil; but in this consist not its great value. I am not a prophet, and most likely never will be; but, sir, I predict and believe that the London of America is destined to be built on the coast of Oregon, at or near the mouth of the Columbia. The city that is to carry on the commerce with India and China will be planted there. And notwithstanding it sounds wild, Utopian, a railroad will be made across this continent to the Columbia—from 15,000 to 20,000 miles of navigation in the voyage to China and the Indies will be saved by it—far more than half the voyage. Captain Frémont astonishes us in his description of the great South Pass in the Rocky

mountains. Why, sir, we can cross the mountains without scarcely perceiving the acclivity. For 127 miles, the ascent, he tells us, is gradual, hardly perceptible; and at the dividing ridge, or apex, the acclivity is not greater than the ascent from the Pennsylvania avenue to this Capitol. This will be the route for the railroad destined to carry the trade and commerce of the East on its road to Europe, as well as into the heart of our own country. The iron horse, will thunder through this pass, bearing in his long train the riches of the world, filling our land with wealth and happiness, the abundant fruits of our great enterprise. In view of these things, I am for the whole of Oregon, every inch of it, and I heartily desire the notice to be given.